

**City of Reading City Council
Regular Meeting
October 10, 2016**

Council President Waltman called the meeting to order.

The invocation was given by Saul Hodge from First Century Worship Center.

All present pledged to the flag.

ATTENDANCE

Council President J. Waltman

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz, District 2

Councilor Twyman, District 3

Councilor Marmarou, District 4

Councilor Reed, District 5

Councilor Slifko, District 6

City Auditor D. Cituk

Solicitor C. Younger

City Clerk L. Kelleher

Managing Director G. Steckman

There was (1) executive session during the Committee of the Whole meeting that took place before the start of this meeting.

Council President Waltman announced that Councilor Daubert is excused from the meeting due to an illness.

PROCLAMATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

The following were issued at the meeting:

- Commendation celebrating Fire Prevention Week was presented to the Fire Marshal
- Commendation celebrating National Recovery Month

PUBLIC COMMENT

Council President Waltman stated that there are six (6) citizens registered to address Council, five (5) on agenda matters and one (1) on non-agenda matters. He inquired if any Councilor objected to suspending the rule requiring non-agenda comment at the end of the meeting. As no one objected the rule was suspended.

Councilor Reed read the public speaking rules that were adopted by Council.

David Baker, of Elm St., apologized for speaking rudely at past meetings. He expressed the belief that the use of treatment for drug abuse is more beneficial than penalties that could include incarceration. He suggested that the decriminalization of marijuana ordinance should require a minimum of two (2) hours to six (6) hours of community service to clean up streets, parks, playgrounds, etc.

Evelyn Morrison, of Rose St., stated that a group of citizens exercised their ability to place a discussion topic on Council's agenda by gathering 35 signatures on a petition as per Charter Section 1111. She stated that the group next plans to circulate a petition to require a special Council Meeting. She noted that there were some issues with the initial petitioning process that can be addressed later. She expressed the belief that stenographers should be used to record testimony at all public hearings so transcripts can be provided to the federal government. She stated that she expects to see a stenographer at the public hearing for the CDBG Action Plan. She expressed the belief that the organizations funded in the 2014-15-16 CDBG Action Plans do not reflect the population. She noted the various required forms that must be included with the Action Plan to reflect the employees at the organizations funded. She described her concerns with the preparation of the CDBG Action Plan.

Shelia Perez, of Weiser St., expressed the belief that members of Council are being rude when they choose to write during the public comment period rather than pay attention to the speaker's statements. She described various problems with obtaining public access to the CDBG Action Plan. She stated that the plan should be available electronically on the City's website and in hard copy at various locations. She expressed the belief that the public hearing for the CDBG Action Plan should be at the beginning of the development process, rather than at the end. She stated that citizens are the CEO's of city government acting as the financial watch dogs. She noted the historic problems with unpaid Section 108 loans in the CDBG Action Plan and erroneous transfers from the General Fund to the CD Department.

Lance Cobb, of Walnut St., was not present.

Sam Albert, of 505 Penn St., asked City Council to consider doing careful due diligence as they consider the ordinance to decriminalize marijuana due to the major health concerns that accompany the decriminalization. He expressed the belief that the decriminalization will encourage the youth to partake in using this drug. He noted that while the youth makeup is only 20% of the population, they are 100% of our future. He noted that marijuana is no longer distributed in its natural form as it is chemically altered to make it more powerful and dangerous. He described the various health and mental problems associated with the use of marijuana, short and long term. He stated that the decriminalization of marijuana sends a mixed message. He described the problems experienced in Colorado.

John Turner, from Mohnton, stated that he is the President of the Reading Skateboard Park Association. He introduced his colleague and asked the City to consider creating skateboard park facilities in Reading.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA & MINUTES

Council President Waltman called Council's attention to the agenda for this meeting, including the legislation listed under the Consent Agenda heading, and the minutes from the September 26th Regular Meeting of Council. He noted that there are two (2) additions to the Consent Agenda: 1) an award of contract for the supplemental service of the City Code and 2) a resolution authorizing a project for the decoration of the downtown for the upcoming holiday season. He stated that a petition was received to place a topic "Community Development Block Grants 2016-17" on the agenda. That item will be discussed under Council Business.

Councilor Marmarou moved, seconded by Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz to approve the minutes from the September 26th Regular Meeting of Council and the agenda, as amended, including the legislation listed under the Consent Agenda heading.

Consent Agenda

A. Resolution – authorizing the deposit of \$15,000 from the Berks County Community Foundation Hawley and Myrtle Quier Fund into an existing City bank account, authorized in January 2016, for "Holidays in Reading 2016" to cover the expense of obtaining a contractor to decorate the downtown for the upcoming Holiday season and creating a project to account for the revenue and expenses associated with the program.

B. Award of Contract – for the purchase of the Kenhorst Blvd. ADA Curb Ramps to Heim Construction Company, Orwigsburg, PA at the cost of \$354,991.25.

C. Award of Contract – for the purchase of supplemental services for the City Code to American Legal Publishing, Cincinnati, Ohio

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

The managing director stated that the mayor is not at the meeting due to his daughter's birthday. He noted that at last week's PML conference a resolution supporting the collection of commuter tax outside of Act 47 was adopted.

AUDITOR'S REPORT

City Auditor Cituk read the report distributed to Council at the meeting, in summary:

- Update on the Municipal Sewer Rate 2017-18
- Update on Pension State Aid
- Update on the completion of the 2015 External Audit

REPORT FROM DEPT. DIRECTORS, BOARDS, AUTHORITIES, & COMMISSIONS

None.

ORDINANCES FOR FINAL PASSAGE

Pending Legislation

Bill No. 2016 – creating the Reading Regional Water Authority *Introduced at the May 23 regular meeting*

Bill No. 2016 - amending the City's Zoning Ordinance, Section 600-800, Districts, Section 600-1203 Conditional Use, Section 600-2100 Telecommunications Towers and Antennas, and Section 600-2206 Telecommunication Definitions *Introduced at the August 8 regular meeting*

Bill No. 2016 - amending the City Code by adding Chapter 184 Controlled Substance, Drug, Device and Cosmetic making the possession of marijuana a summary offense

A. Bill No. 43-2016 – setting the salary of the CD Director at \$82,800 per annum

Councilor Reed moved, seconded by Councilor Slifko, to enact Bill No. 43-2016.

Councilor Slifko moved, seconded by Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz, to amend Bill 43-2016 to reduce the salary to \$82,000.

Bill No. 43-2016 was amended by the following vote:

Yeas: Marmarou, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Reed, Slifko, Twyman, Waltman,
President - 6
Nays: None – 0

Bill No. 43-2016 was enacted, as amended, by the following vote:

Yeas: Marmarou, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Reed, Slifko, Twyman, Waltman, President - 6
Nays: None – 0

B. Bill No. 44-2016 - authorizing the Administration to enter into a one-year intergovernmental cooperation agreement regarding the collection and recycling of various recyclable items generated at multiple Reading School District locations. The Agreement is between the City of Reading and the Reading School District and retroactively effective July 01, 2016.

Councilor Marmarou moved, seconded by Councilor Slifko, to enact Bill No. 44-2016.

Councilor Slifko stated that this arrangement has been successful in the past and he noted the benefits of continuing the agreement.

Bill No. 44-2016 was enacted by the following vote:

Yeas: Marmarou, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Reed, Slifko, Twyman, Waltman,

President - 0

Nays: None - 0

- C. Bill No. 45-2016** – authorizing the addition of a budget item in the amount of \$270,000 to the 2016 budget for the PA DCED Reimbursement Grant for the Asset Conditions Assessment Project.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz moved, seconded by Councilor Reed, to enact Bill No. 45-2016.

The managing director explained that this is a DCED grant to perform an assessment of the City's facilities and their condition.

Bill No. 45-2016 was enacted by the following vote:

Yeas: Marmarou, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Reed, Slifko, Twyman, Waltman,

President - 6

Nays: None - 0

- D. Bill No. 46-2016** - authorizing the transfer of cash reserves in the Sewer Fund in the amount of \$1,749,667.88 from Fund Balance to Engineering Costs and amends the 2016 Sewer Fund operating budget to allocate funds to Engineering to be performed on Waste Water Treatment Plant Upgrades

Councilor Marmarou moved, seconded by Councilor Slifko, to enact Bill No. 46-2016.

Bill No. 46-2016 was enacted by the following vote:

Mr. Johnson explained that this and the next three (3) ordinances make an accounting correction and he explained the detail of each.

Yeas: Marmarou, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Reed, Slifko, Twyman, Waltman, President - 6

Nays: None - 0

- E. Bill No. 47-2016** - authorizing the transfer of cash reserves in the Sewer Fund in the amount of \$345,588.63 from Fund Balance to Engineering Costs and amends the 2016 Sewer Fund operating budget to allocate funds to Engineering to be performed on 19th Ward Pump Station.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz moved, seconded by Councilor Reed, to enact Bill No. 47-2016.

Bill No. 47-2016 was enacted by the following vote:

Yeas: Marmarou, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Reed, Slifko, Twyman, Waltman,

President - 6

Nays: None - 0

F. Bill No. 48-2016 - authorizing the transfer of cash reserves in the Sewer Fund in the amount of \$593,009.63 from Fund Balance to Program Management Costs and amends the 2016 Sewer Fund operating budget to allocate funds to Program Management Services for the Consent Decree Program.

Councilor Slifko moved, seconded by Councilor Reed, to enact Bill No. 48-2016.

Bill No. 48-2016 was enacted by the following vote:

Yeas: Marmarou, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Reed, Slifko, Twyman, Waltman,

President - 6

Nays: None - 0

G. Bill No. 49-2016 - authorizing the transfer of cash reserves in the Sewer Fund in the amount of \$205,309.44 from Fund Balance to Engineering Costs and amends the 2016 Sewer Fund operating budget to allocate funds to Engineering to be performed on 6th and Canal Pump Station Phase II.

Councilor Marmarou moved, seconded by Councilor Twyman, to enact Bill No. 49-2016.

Bill No. 49-2016 was enacted by the following vote:

Yeas: Marmarou, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Reed, Slifko, Twyman, Waltman,

President - 6

Nays: None - 0

INTRODUCTION OF NEW ORDINANCES

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz read the following ordinances into the record:

- A. Bill No. 2016** – authorizing the transfer of \$19,000.00 from Solid Waste General Plant Supplies to General Plant Supplies in the Recycling Fund and a transfer of \$5,000.00 from Advertising in Solid Waste fund to General Plant Supplies in the Recycling fund
- B. Bill No. 2016** – authorizing the removal of Public Property Foreman and adding the position of Public Property Manager, creating a Services Team in the 2016 Position Ordinance

RESOLUTIONS

None.

COUNCIL BUSINESS

Council President Waltman stated that the issue added by petition is now up for discussion.

“Community Development Block Grants Allocations 2016-17”

Mr. Steckman stated that the information that has been requested by the citizens to date was provided. He announced that the CDBG Action Plan public hearing is scheduled for November 7th. He stressed the importance of the public’s participation in the process and doing things correctly. He stated that some citizens seem to be confused between CDBG allocations and Section 108 Loans. He explained that the loans are made outside of the annual Action Plan but can affect the allocations within the Plan if the loans are not repaid.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned if the supporting documentation, such as employment reports, required with the CDBG Action Plan application process are submitted to HUD and considered part of the public record. Mr. Palacios stated that they are.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz noted that Council will be reviewing the CDBG Action Plan on Wednesday, October 19th during the Budget Review meeting. She stated that while public comment is not permitted during these work sessions, the public is invited to attend and listen to the presentation and discussion.

As no further discussion occurred the matter was considered closed.

COUNCIL COMMENT

Councilor Marmarou announced that the Greek Bazaar will take place at St. Constantine and Helen’s this coming weekend.

Councilor Tywman congratulated the citizens for petitioning to initiate a discussion topic. He encouraged public participation. He encouraged Mr. Turner to visit potential skateboard park sites in District 3 and work with him to initiate discussions about creating skateboard parks.

Councilor Reed announced that the deadline for voter registration is October 11th. She noted the importance of voting in elections. She stated that the deadline to submit absentee ballots is approaching.

Councilor Reed stated that she appreciates listening to public comment; however, she noted that she and several other City Councilors take notes during the comment period and as issues are discussed. She stated that people should not assume that Council is not listening if they are writing.

Councilor Reed questioned the curb painting contract and if this is a volunteer project as she has constituents who would like to participate. The managing director stated that Mr. Terrell made a presentation to the mayor and managing director for compensation of \$3K to paint the curbs on Penn Street. He stated that as they want to spruce up Penn Street, they agreed to the proposal as it is difficult to have accountability with volunteers.

Councilor Reed inquired if the mayor and managing director are open to receiving other similar proposals. The managing director stated that other proposals would be considered.

Councilor Slifko stated that PennDOT is upgrading their line painting on the 5th St corridor.

Councilor Slikfo stated that he, Councilor Twyman, the City Clerk along with the mayor and managing director attended the PML conference in Lancaster last week. He stated that it was a valuable experience to discuss issues with representatives from other municipalities. He also noted the remarkable vibrancy of Lancaster's downtown.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz thanked those who provided public comment at tonight's meeting and she congratulated the citizens who petitioned to add an agenda item. She noted the importance of Recovery Month and the spirit of the recovery community.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz noted the wealth of volunteers within District 2. She questioned the street sweeping schedule for Cotton Street. She noted the great events that occurred downtown over the past weekend; however she noted that all trash receptacles were brimming over with trash. She noted the need for attention to trash removal when events occur over weekends. The managing director agreed and described his personal experience seeing the overflowing trash receptacles and that there should be sufficient DID coverage over weekends, especially when events are planned.

Councilor Waltman noted the importance of fire prevention and the importance smoke detectors play in public safety. He also noted the importance of recovery from alcohol, drugs and cigarettes and how those things negatively impact a person's health and wellbeing.

Council President Waltman reviewed the upcoming Council meeting schedule.

Councilor Marmarou moved, seconded by Councilor Slifko, to adjourn the regular meeting of Council.

Respectfully submitted by Linda A. Kelleher CMC, City Clerk